

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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R 311215Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0321

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 10322

NODIS

FOR LORD AND ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, TECH, PARM, IN

SUBJ: NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY

REF: A. STATE 172123

B. DELHI 10311

1. REF B TRANSMITS BANE'S CONVERSATION WITH IAEC CHAIRMAN SETHNA ON JULY 30. IN PARA 10 OF THIS MESSAGE SETHNA REITERATES HIS VIEW THAT THE GOI MAY REVIEW ITS NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY, THAT THIS COULD OCCUR WITHIN 30 DAYS, AND COULD POSSIBLY ULTIMATELY RESULT IN AN INDIAN DECISION TO EXPORT NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO SIGNATORIES OF NPT. CANADIAN SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT SEEMS TO BE THE ONE WHICH IS ANNOYING THE INDIANS MOST AND TO BE TRIGGERING THEIR REACTION ON THEIR OWN EXPORT POLICY. THE GROUNDS FOR THIS NEVER COME THROUGH VERY CLEARLY FROM SETHNA, AND BANE WAS UNABLE TO DRAW SETHNA INTO MAKING IT ANY MORE EXPLICIT. FROM SETHNA'S REMARKS, PIQUE AS MUCH AS ANYTHING ELSE WOULD SEEM TO BE A MOTIVATING FORCE.

2. I KNOW THAT YOU CONSIDERED AND BALANCED THE ADVANTAGES OF BRINGING ALL ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS TOGETHER AT A LARGER MEETING (WHICH MIGHT HAVE RESULTED IN MUCH POSTURING AND NOT MUCH

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ACTION) AS OPPOSED TO A SMALLER MEETING (WHICH SEEM

TO BE ACHIEVING SOME CONCRETE RESULTS). AND I WELCOME THE IDEA THAT EXPLORATORY TALKS IN THE SMALLER NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP MAY LEAD TO BROADER DISCUSSIONS WHICH COULD INCLUDE INDIA. LOOKING AT IT FROM THIS SIDE, I STRONGLY ENDORSE BANE'S VIEW THAT THE EARLIER THIS CAN BE DONE, THE BETTER. TO WORK OUT A FAIRLY DETAILED FRAMEWORK WHICH THE INDIANS WOULD THEN MERELY BE ASKED TO ACCEPT AND IN WHICH THEY WOULD FEEL THEY WERE NOT "IN AT THE CREATION," COULD RESULT IN THEIR DRAWING BACK IN A HUFF AND GOING THEIR OWN WAY, ALTHOUGH SETHNA GAVE NO DIRECT HINT OF THIS TO BANE THIS WEEK.

3. I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT OUR VIEW WOULD BE OF A CHANGE IN INDIA'S EXPORT POLICY WHICH IN FACT ALLOWED FOR NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY EXPORT TO NPT SIGNATORIES ONLY (ALTHOUGH I SUGGEST THAT THE INDIANS COULD NOT EXPLICITLY FORMULATE THEIR POLICY PUBLICLY IN SUCH TERMS IN VIEW OF THEIR OWN REFUSAL TO SIGN THE TREATY). THUS FAR, OF COURSE, THE INDIANS APPEAR TO HAVE ADHERED QUITE STRICTLY TO THE GENERAL POINTS WE SUGGESTED TO THEM LAST NOVEMBER. INDEED, SETHNA EXPRESSED SOME PUZZLEMENT TO BANE (WHICH I SHARE) AS TO WHY THE IAEA PULLED BACK FROM ITS EARLIER PLAN TO MONITOR THE TARAPUR SPENT FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT DESPITE INDIAN WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW INSTALLATION OF MONITORING DEVICES.

4. I FRANKLY DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO FOLLOW UP ON A DIALOGUE AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL HERE, UNLESS WE ARE PREPARED TO SAY SOME FAIRLY EXPLICIT THINGS ABOUT HOW WE ENVISAGE INDIA'S PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL SUPPLIERS' DISCUSSIONS. THE INDIANS ARE GREAT ONES FOR EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO ANSWER WHY, IF WE WANT THE INDIANS' COOPERATION ON EXPORT POLICY, WE AREN'T WILLING TO SEE THEM JOIN THE "CLUB" AT THIS POINT. I UNDERSTAND P.N. DHAR MAY BE ON HIS WAY OUT AS THE PM'S PRIVATE SECRETARY EARLY THIS FALL. IF SO, WE DOUBT HE REPRESENTS A CHANNEL ON WHICH WE WANT TO FOCUS AT

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THIS TIME IN ANY EVENT. I THINK CHAVAN'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY IN THE FALL MAY BE THE BEST POINT AT WHICH TO TAKE THIS UP AGAIN IF WE HAVE SOMETHING SUBSTANTIVE TO SAY. IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA IF I WERE TO GIVE CHAVAN SOME ADVANCE NOTICE OF OUR INTENTION TO RAISE NUCLEAR SUPPLY POLICY AT THAT TIME, HOWEVER, SO THAT THE INDIANS CAN "BE PREPARED." CHAVAN WILL LEAVE FOR THE LIMA NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE

THE THIRD WEEK IN AUGUST AND WILL STAY ON FOR AT
LEAST THE FIRST WEEK OF THE UN SPECIAL SESSION.
HE WILL, HOWEVER, BE BACK FOR A WEEK OR TWO IN MID-
SEPTEMBER. EARLY IN THIS LATTER TIMEFRAME MAY BE
THE BEST POINT AT WHICH TO SUGGEST FOLLOW-UP DIS-
CUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR POLICY IN WASHINGTON IF YOU
BELIEVE THAT WOULD BE USEFUL. I SUSPECT THAT, EVEN
IF NUCLEAR SUPPLY POLICY IS REVIEWED IN THE NEXT
MONTH AS SETHNA HINTS, WE ARE UNLIKELY TO BE FACED
WITH A SNAP DECISION TO CHANGE POLICY BEFORE CHAVAN
MEETS WITH THE SECRETARY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPORTS, POLICIES, CAT-C, FISSIONABLE MATERIALS TRANSFER, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE10322
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840178-2188, N750003-0075
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975074/aaaaadgd.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 75 STATE 172123, 75 NEW DELHI 10311
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 DEC 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <08 APR 2003 by Izenbel0, RDFRD, REFER TO DOE>; RELEASED <01 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY
TAGS: PARM, PFOR, TECH, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006